

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 29571

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJ: ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMITTEE APPOINTED

REF: A) BANGKOK 20290, B) BANGKOK 20291

SUMMARY: IN ONE OF ITS FINAL ACTS, NARC APPOINTED AN
ELEVEN MAN ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMITTEE ON OCT 21.

END SUMMARY.

1. THE NATION ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM COUNCIL (NARC), IN
ONE OF ITS FINAL ACTS ON OCT. 21, APPOINTED AN ANTI-
CORRUPTION COMMITTEE. THE COMMITTEE WILL BE HEADED BY
CHALOEM SATHITTHONG, FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE CIVIL
COURT, WHO WAS PREVIOUSLY NAMED TO HEAD A SIMILAR
COMMITTEE UNDER THE SENI GOVERNMENT (SEE REF A).
THAWIN WISUTTHICHINDA, DIRECTOR OF THE EXPORT INSPECTION
DIVISION OF THE CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT OF THE FINANCE
MINISTRY, WILL BE THE SECRETARY-GENERAL. UTHAI
SINTHUSAN, NOMINATED TO BE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE
COMMITTEE UNDER SENI, WILL BE A MEMBER OF THE PRESENT ACC.
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2. THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ARE PHAN NAIWITHIT, RETIRED JUDGE; SUTHI AKATROEK, INSPECTOR IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE; MRS. SURIYAPHAN MANIWAT, WRITER AND CHIEF ACCOUNTANT OF THE ELECTRICITY GENERATING AUTHORITY OF THAILAND (EGAT); SANO UNAKUN, GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF THAILAND; ADM. (RET) KAMON SITAKALIN, FORMER DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER IN THE KHUKRIT CABINET; LTG ANGKUN THATTANON, BORDER PATROL POLICE COMMISSIONER; ACM (RET) PRASONG KHUNNADILOK JUST RETIRED AS CHIEF OF AIR STAFF; AND LTG (RET) PRASOET PHUNKASEM, FORMERLY OF THE SUPREME COMMAND STAFF.

3. BIO DATA ON CHALOEM SATHITHONG WAS SENT TO DEPART IN REF B. BIO DATA ON THAWIN WISUTTHICHINDA WILL BE SENT SEPTTEL.

4. COMMENT: ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ARE REPUTED TO BE MEN OF HONESTY AND INTEGRITY, BUT DO NOT APPEAR TO HAVE THE PUBLIC STATURE NECESSARY TO ROOT OUT CORRUPTION EFFECTIVELY, ESPECIALLY IN HIGH PLACES, WITHOUT THE WHOLEHEARTED SUPPRT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, HIS ADVISORY COUNCIL. THE NARC AND THE PRIME MINISTER MOVED AHEAD QUICKLY TO CARRY OUT THEIR PLEDGE TO GIVE THE ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN A HIGH PRIORITY. EVERY SPOKESMEN FOR THE NARC AND THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS EMPHASIZED THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION IN THIS FIELD.

5. AMCONSUL SONGKHLA REPORTS THAT THE CHIEF JUDGE OF SONGKHLA, MIPHAT PHOTRANADAN, WHO CLAIMS TO KNOW PRIME MINISTER THANIN KRAIWICHIAN WELL, EXPECTS HIM TO PUSH VERY HARD IN HIS CAMPAIGN TO ELIMINATE CORRUPTION. MIPHAT SAID HE FORMERLY WORKED FOR THANIN IN THE BANGKOK SUPERIOR COURT AND FOUND HIM TO BE THOROUGHLY DEDICATED AND HARDWORKING AND THE "ONLY COMPLETELY HONEST JUDGE AT THAT LEVEL IN BANGKOK". MIPHAT THOUGHT THAT THANIN WOULD NOT BACK OFF, EVEN IF THE ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN BEGAN TO GORE THE OXEN OF PMAC MEMBERS.

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6. THE ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN MIGHT VERY WELL BE AN ISSUE ON WHICH THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS ADVISORY COUNCIL MAY DIFFER. CORRUPTION INVOLVES INFLUENTIAL PERSONS WITHIN THE BUREAUCRACY, THE POLICE, THE ARMED FORCES, AND IN BUSINESS. IF THE PRIME MINISTER PUSHES TOO HARD AND TOO PRECIPITOUSLY, THEREBY STEPPING ON INFLUENTIAL TOES, HE COULD ENCOUNTER SERIOUS OPPOSITION FROM WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. IF, ON THE

OTHER HAND, ACTION ON CORRUPTION DOES NOT MATCH ITS
RHETORIC, THE NEW GOVERNMENT WILL TEND TO LOSE ITS
CREDIBILITY WITH THE PUBLIC.
WHITEHOUSE

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